

## Michigan Proposal 2

Citizens of the great state of Michigan! This November, a proposal resides on the ballot that will send the ethics of the science community down a long slippery slope leading to questionable ends. Proposal 2 of the Michigan ballot this November asks you, a Michigan voter, to decide to amend the state's constitution in order to “prohibit state and local laws that prevent, restrict, or discourage stem cell research”. Targeting the currently limited human embryonic stem cell research industry, this amendment plans to remove all legislative controls from this industry, in order to allow it to seek cures.

But has this research on human embryos actually discovered effective treatments? To date, there has not been one single treatment developed from the use of human embryos, anywhere in the world. That means that you are being asked to remove from legislative authority an industry that has yet to prove its value, let alone prove a necessity for existence *above the law*. Research in other, unregulated, laboratories has not achieved any more than the regulated industry currently operational in Michigan, indicating that deregulation does not increase health benefits. For example, the state of California has passed a bond proposal that uses three hundred million dollars, per year, *of taxpayers' money* to fund such embryonic stem cell research – and has yielded no health benefits. This research, then, holds no advantage over research on the readily, and safely, obtainable stem cells from *adult* humans, which have been used to treat more than seventy diseases.

Proposal 2 also begins a decline in values that recent history shows leads to scary consequences. As indicated by events in the state of California, a legislature's allowing embryonic stem cell research is often only the first step before the legislature's allotting *taxpayer money* to fund this research. This forces all citizens of the state to fund embryonic stem cell research, regardless of their moral beliefs that may or may not recognise the destruction of human life inherent in this research. This removal of personal moral choice contradicts the long-held tradition of religious freedom in the United States and desecrates rights to conscientious objection. Australia provides an example of how approval of embryonic stem cell research leads to other threatening legislation. In the province of Victoria, a

controversial bill is under debate that removes a doctor's right to conscientious objection; that is, the ability of a medical professional to refuse to perform treatment that violates his or her religious beliefs. In Britain, laws permitting human embryo research have led to the creation of “chimeras”, embryos that are a hybrid of human and animal genes, a disgusting concept that completely disregards the unique dignity of a human being.

Some question the idea of “human” dignity applying to an embryo. After all, is an embryo not a mere mass of cells? However, logical thought quickly disperses this idea. An embryo is simply one more stage in human development, as the human person matures, grows, and changes. For example, we use words such as “child”, “adolescent”, and “adult” to describe human development. Implicit in the use of each of these words is the idea of “human-ness”; that is, if someone is described as a “child”, he is immediately assumed to be a human being, even though the actual word “human” is not used. In this context, a human embryo is simply another stage in the life of a human being. Thus, permitting unregulated research on human embryos is analogous to permitting unregulated research on all human children.

The immediate concern present is that of an unregulated industry; however, this legislation creates a path to a dramatic loss of human dignity: the lowering of human life to the level of a lab animal, to be freely used for research. This makes it imperative that you, a citizen of the state of Michigan, unite against Proposal 2, so that this state may be spared the ravages of an industry run amok, without legislative oversight, and be saved from a degradation of the human dignity so important to the Founders of this great nation.